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This service is for general distribution of information and news to Sailors and Marines and their families, civilian employees, and retired members of the Navy and Marine Corps and their families. Further dissemination of this information is encouraged.

Stories for this week include:

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Headline: Need Glasses? Take Your Pick!

It used to be, if you were a Sailor or Marine who needed glasses, you had little choice in the frame you would wear.

Thick black or brown plastic frames surrounded the lens. They're durable. They're practical. They're low cost to the Navy.

They're ugly.

If you're one of the 245,000 Sailors or Marines who must wear glasses, take heart. Help is on the way.

Beginning this month, Navy opticians are gearing up to give Sailors and Marines a choice when it comes to eye glass frames. They'll be several frames available, including stylish wire rims and plastic tortoise shell.

"We're phasing the FOC (frames of choice program) in," said HMC Kenneth Smith of the Naval Ophthalmic Support and Training Activity in Norfolk, VA, the command responsible for coordinating the FOC program. "We can't possibly do everybody who wants new glasses all at once. We'll do a few commands at a time."

While Sailors and Marines aboard USS ROOSEVELT and USS

MOUNT WHITNEY participated in the testing of FOC, USS CARR's Sailors will be the first to get new glasses under the Navy-wide implementation of the program. Other commands will follow, until everyone who wants new glasses has a pair made for them. That's expected to take about two years.

Commanders, commanding officers and officers-in-charge of hospitals and clinics that have eye glass-making capability are working with the Line community to determine who or which activities get to participate in the FOC program first.

Glasses with the new frames can be made from any prescription, civilian or military, that is not more than two years old, providing the patient has 20/20 or better corrected vision and no visual complaints.

Sailors or Marines must be on active duty for at least 30 days before they can have the new glasses made.

BUMED Notice 6810 provides additional information.

By Jan Davis, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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Headline: BUMED Going to "Paperless" Directives

Washington, DC--If you go to pick up a Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) directive from your admin department, don't be surprised if you're handed a CD disk.

When it comes to distributing BUMED's instructions, notices, change transmittals, the Manual of the Medical Department, and the General Medical Officer Manual, you'll find it on a single CD, which will be distributed to all ships and stations having medical personnel by next April.

"There are a lot of advantages to having it on one disk," said Laura Frantz, head of BUMED's regulations and directives branch. "They're easy to store and easy to distribute, and are also durable. Each copy you print off is an original, so it will be clear, not like a copy that has been repeatedly copied," said Frantz. "And, fewer trees have to die to disseminate the information."

Additionally, the CD version will make it easier for ships and operational units in the field. All that is needed is a CD drive, a laptop computer and the BUMED directives disk to take all the medical directives along.

In addition to this method of disseminating the directives, eventually all BUMED directives and other Navy Medicine publications will be available on the World Wide Web, including the forms used for reporting information from the field. Frantz said that once the forms are available through the Internet, commands may send their completed forms electronically.

"This is a great way to get and send information," said Frantz, "but commands that don't have Web access or computers equipped with CD players should consider this an early warning. There's going to be less and less paper coming out of BUMED, and unless you have the equipment, it's going to be tough to get the information."

By Jan Davis, BUMED

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Headline: Computers Win in Books Vs. Computer Training

Camp Pendleton, CA--When it comes to teaching emergency medical responsiveness on the battlefield, which works better -- books and lectures, or computers?

That's the question Dr. Eric Allely of the Henry Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine in Bethesda, MD, had for 16 corpsmen and Marines.

He set up an experiment that used three groups of corpsmen and one group of Marines from Combat Service Support (CSS) Enterprise, an element of the war fighting laboratory of the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Experimental, which has the mission of developing advanced warfare concepts and supporting experimental technologies.

The Marine group and one group of corpsmen were trained on a special interactive computer program, known as MERLIN, short for Medical Readiness Learning Initiative. MERLIN replicates medical scenarios to teach basic triage and casualty skills needed on the battlefield.

A third group of corpsmen was trained traditionally with books and lecture.

The last group, the control group, received no training at all.

According to Allely, the results showed that training on MERLIN for corpsmen as well as Marines helped them make faster, more accurate decisions about treating Sailors and Marines injured in battle.

"It's not the only way medical personnel will learn triage management, but it's an excellent cross training tool," said LT Lee Kiobasa, MSC, CSS Enterprise medical detachment commander. "It's the most modern and realistic training available indoors."

Besides the realistic training it provides, Kiobasa said that the corpsmen seem to prefer the interactive way of learning rather than the book-and-lecture method.

"It holds their attention longer, especially with the younger generations," he said.

The course is now on a laser video disk, but will eventually be available on CD and the Internet. The video footage for the computer course was shot on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton two years ago by videographers who used real Marines and four paid actors.

MERLIN is a pilot project sponsored by the Uniformed Services University of Health Services and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. Concurrent evaluations of the course are being conducted throughout the armed services.

By LCPL Amy Forsythe, First Marine Expeditionary Force

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Headline: Bremerton Outreach Team Teaches Coping

Bremerton, WA--Naval Hospital (NH) Bremerton is

reaching out to touch Sailors and Marines and their families.

The hospital has established a Psychiatric Outreach Team, a mobile group of psychiatric technicians and nurses who reach out into the Navy and Marine Corps community to provide training in suicide awareness and prevention, anger and stress management, and conflict resolution.

This training was provided routinely at the Bremerton hospital, but taking it out to local commands is a new concept.

"This is a true example of hitting the deckplates with training that is customized to fit the needs of the command," said NH Bremerton's Mental Health Division Officer LT Wendy Stouder, NC. "Our aim is to teach the Marine or Sailor his or her role in the prevention process as a leader, shipmate or friend."

Along with responding to requests to take their "show on the road" to commands and providing on-going monthly education and training, the team also participates in hospital sponsored health promotion fairs in the local Navy community.

By Judith A. Williams, NH Bremerton

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Headline: The Marine Corps Marathon: Agony and Ecstasy

Washington, DC--They look perfectly normal, these veterans of the 21st running of the Marine Corps Marathon. True, they may be a bit leaner than most people, and perhaps a bit more tan from all that outdoor running. But still, you'd never guess they'd just run more than 26 miles without stopping.

They're the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's (BUMED) "marathon people," an even dozen in all, who sported their white and blue BUMED t-shirts during the race and were rewarded with shouts of "Go Navy Medicine!" from spectators and Marines alike.

It was the cheering that kept many of them going.

"Even though I knew there were 19 thousand runners out there, I felt like they were cheering for me personally," said HMCS Dennis Allen.

For Allen; CDR Tracy Malone, NC; LCDR Ian Hendricks, MSC; LCDR Steve Keener, MSC; LT Anne Swap, MSC; LT Tony Frabutt, MSC; LT Bob Fry, MSC; and LT Ty Turbyfill, DC; it was their first marathon, each running for a different reason. One caught the running "bug" from a co-worker, and they began training together. For another, it was a life goal, a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Still another reached a "very significant birthday" and instead of focusing on it, wanted to focus on running.

They speak of "taking the hill", that last deadly incline before the finish line. They discuss sore legs and shoulders, blistered toes, and blackened toenails they will lose within the next few days, badges of courage that elicit small smiles from their cohorts and looks of incomprehension

from non-runners.

Some of the BUMED marathon people have done this before. For LCDR Tim Neumann, DC, and CDR Rick Young, DC, it was their second race, with, "possibly" others to follow. For LCDR John Saunders, MSC, it was his fourth.

"It gets easier. Really," said Saunders.

And then there's CAPT Jerry Patee, MSC, who ran the 26.2 miles for the 32nd time.

"I ran this morning," said Patee, the morning after the race. "I feel fine. But then, I'm a runner, it's something I do."

By Jan Davis, BUMED

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Headline: Guantanamo Medical Team Helps Chinese Aliens

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba--U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, medical personnel helped treat more than a hundred Chinese aliens recently when the ship they were in was diverted to Guantanamo.

Dubbed Operation Marathon, the joint operation to return the Chinese back to their homeland was undertaken by Sailors from the Naval Base, Marines from the Marine Corps Barracks and Marine Forces Atlantic, officials from the Department of State, and USNH Guantanamo Bay personnel.

The 40 member medical team, lead by LCDR Robert Metts, MC; LTJG Anthony Williams, MSC; LCDR Susan Gianino, NC; and ENS Hector Gonzalez, MSC; examined and treated the Chinese, who had been in the cramped and dirty freighter for almost three months.

"The Chinese aliens were apprehensive, but in relatively good health considering what they had been through," said HMI Elisha Alexander, who was a member of the medical team. However, the screening did discover one individual with a heart ailment. He was healthy enough to remain with his group when they were returned to their homeland earlier this month.

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Headline: Right Spirit Task Force Convenes

Washington, DC--The second meeting of the Right Spirit Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Deglamorization Campaign task force convened 22-24 October to review the Navy's alcohol policy.

Command drug and alcohol program advisors (DAPAs), fleet and force master chiefs, alcohol and drug control officers, alcohol abuse prevention experts, treatment center personnel, and other fleet representatives gathered at the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) to discuss policy changes designed to encourage all Navy personnel to pursue healthy lifestyles and to discourage irresponsible use of alcohol.

The task force reviewed alcohol abuse prevention initiatives, evaluated the new Navy Drug World Wide Web (NAVDWEB) homepage for the Internet, and viewed a newly-produced alcohol abuse prevention and deglamorization video

designed for recruits.

NAVDWEB is accessible through the BUPERS Homepage or on the Internet at <http://www.nprdc.navy.mil/navdweb>.

Sailors can learn more about The Right Spirit alcohol abuse prevention and deglamorization campaign in ALNAV 011/96 and NAVOP 008/96. Command DAPAs also will be able to provide additional information.

By Michael McLellan, BUPERS

-USN-

Headline: Pearl Harbor Hosts Women's Health Fair

Naval Medical Clinic (NMC) Pearl Harbor hosted its first Women's Health Fair recently, providing lectures and exhibits on such topics as mammography and breast exams, blood pressure and cardiac health, cholesterol, and tobacco cessation.

Attendees included women on active duty as well as family members.

LCDR Ellen Scurry, NC, the event's coordinator, said the fair was held in conjunction with Women's Health Month. The clinic hopes to hold the fair annually.

By HM2 Marva Benson and LTJG Boling, NMC Pearl Harbor

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Headline: Health Promotion Director Course Offered

The Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) will sponsor a health promotion training course 9-13 December at Naval Station Pearl Harbor, HI.

The five day course will be presented by the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research, a recognized leader in corporate health promotion programs. The course will provide training and practical knowledge for developing, implementing and evaluating health promotion programs for commands. Participants must complete an eight to ten hour post-course examination to receive their certification.

The course is intended for health promotion directors and coordinators at Pacific Fleet activities, active or Reserve, who are charged with program management. Only 40 quotas are available. The course will be repeated at Dam Neck, VA in February 1997 for East Coast activities and at a location on the West Coast in April.

For more information, contact Ms. Becky Washburn, (757)363-1345, DSN 564-5598, fax 757 444-1345, or e-mail prevmed@med.navy.mil.

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Headline: TRICARE Question and Answer

Q. Where can I find information about TRICARE Standard/CHAMPUS?

A. Besides your local TRICARE Service Center or your nearest military hospital or clinics, TRICARE Standard/CHAMPUS information is now available on the homepage of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, <http://www.ha.osd.mil>.

Users can find information easily by looking under the TRICARE heading, and then finding the TRICARE Support Office. By clicking on this item, users have access to a variety of TRICARE Standard/CHAMPUS information including manuals, news releases, beneficiary and provider handbooks, program statistics, health benefit management course schedules, contracting schedules, CHAMPUS maximum allowable charge (CMAC) rates and more.

Additional links to TRICARE Lead Agents, uniformed services homepage, Health Care Financing Administration (Medicare), Commerce Business Daily and other DOD addresses are available through the homepage.

If you have a TRICARE question, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery now has a dedicated e-mail address to send in your questions and get a response via MEDNEWS. The address is TRICARE@bms200.med.navy.mil.

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Headline: Healthwatch: What To Do If You Catch The Flu

You meant to, but you just never got around to getting that flu shot. And now, you've got the chills, the fever, and aches that are associated with influenza.

If you do have the flu, there are some actions you can take to help you feel better and get you back on your feet.

- Drink plenty of decaffeinated hot liquids, such as herbal teas, lemon juice and honey. Doing so will soothe your throat, relieve congestion and replace bodily fluids.

- Suck on hard candies or lozenges.

- Gargle with tepid salt water.

- Avoid dairy products, which can thicken mucus secretions.

- Take aspirin or acetaminophen to relieve fever and pain. Don't give aspirin to children.

- Wash your hands frequently to avoid infecting others.

- See your doctor if your fever is higher than 100 degrees for more than two days; you're coughing up yellow or green phlegm; your chest hurts when you cough or breathe; or you start to wheeze or become breathless.

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Feedback and comments are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact Jan Davis, MEDNEWS editor, at e-mail address mednews@bms200.med.navy.mil, telephone 202/762-3223, DSN 762-3223, or fax 202/762-3224.

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